

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Project Name: Establish a new recreational use access trail across State land.	Proposed Implementation Date: 2015
Proponent: Bureau of Land Management, 5 Lasar Dr., Glasgow, MT 59230	
Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to establish a new 2-track vehicle trail across approximately 1/3 of a mile of State land in Section 36, Township 36N, Range 38E. The purpose of this trail is to link together other trails across adjacent BLM and private land in order to improve access to federal and State lands in the area.	
Location: NE4 Section 36, Township 36N, Range 38E	County: Valley

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Bureau of Land Management proposed the access trail be established through lands managed by them as well as lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. After discussing the project with Field Manager Pat Gunderson of the Glasgow BLM office, BLM completed an EA for the part of the trail that would cross federal land; and an official request to establish the access trail across State land was made.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	Bureau of Land Management proposed the project, as the access trail will cross federal lands managed by the BLM and link together existing access trails across BLM land.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<p>Action Alternative: Grant permission to Bureau of Land Management to establish a 2-track access trail across State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny permission to Bureau of Land Management to establish a 2-track access trail across State land.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The area of impact contains clayey soils that are not unusual, fragile or unstable. The proposed access trail would result in soil compaction under the trail and slightly increase the potential for erosion of soils along the trail.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no changes to soils on the State land.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed access trail would not negatively impact the quality, quantity and distribution of water.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative, there will be no impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on the State land will have minimal impact to the air quality. Some dust may occur due to vehicle use.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The current vegetative community consists primarily of native grasses, forbs and shrubs. The project would slightly reduce the quantity and quality of vegetation on the State land. There would be increased potential for noxious weed introduction. No rare plants are present.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plant communities on the State land.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?

Action Alternative: The State land provides habitat for upland birds, mule deer and antelope. There is a large potential for recreation (hunting) on this State land. The proposed trail is in accordance with mitigation measures outlined in BLM's Hilina RMP, and establishment of the trail will have minimal impacts to Greater Sage-Grouse.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the possible use of the State land as wildlife habitat.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?

Action Alternative: The trail will have no impact on unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources. Greater Sage-Grouse are seasonally present, but the trail complies with mitigation measures outlined in BLM's Hilina RMP.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the environmental resources.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?

Action Alternative: The area of impact contains no historical, archaeological or paleontological resources. There are rock cairns on surrounding hilltops in the area, but the proposed trail will have no impact on these.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impact to historical or archaeological sites under this alternative.

11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?

Action Alternative: The proposed access trail will have minimal impact on the aesthetics of the area. Noise levels may increase slightly due to increased vehicle traffic, but there will be no excessive levels of noise or light.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to aesthetics associated with the

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	State land.
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed trail would place no demands on any environmental resources in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demands placed on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>Action Alternative: This project will not impact any other plans or studies that Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has on the State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plans or studies that Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has on the State land.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>Action Alternative: The access trail would slightly increase the risk of fire during dry seasons due to increased vehicle traffic.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to human health or safety.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impact on the livestock grazing that occurs on this tract. There may be a benefit to the lessee from having better access through the pasture.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to agricultural activities on the State land.</p>
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF	Action Alternative: The project will

<p>EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>not create nor impact any jobs in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local and state tax base and tax revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will increase traffic along existing trails slightly. There may be a need for increased patrolling from State and federal game wardens in the area to enforce recreation rules/laws due to the increase in vehicle traffic.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no additional demand for government services.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will need to clear State and BLM management plans before implementation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of alternative there will be no impacts on locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There is a large potential for recreation within the tract and surrounding areas. The access trail would significantly improve access to recreation areas through the State land. This trail would allow access to thousands of acres of previously difficult-to-access public land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the recreational values associated with the State land under this alternative.</p>

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of population and housing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing.</p>
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not disrupt the traditional lifestyles of the local community.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures under this alternative.</p>
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.</p>
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	<p>Action Alternative: The establishment of this access trail across State land would increase recreation opportunities for people in nearby communities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the economic circumstances under this alternative.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: s/Jack Medlicott\s Date: 10/20/2015
Jack Medlicott Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	No significant impacts are anticipated.

27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:

☐ EIS

☐ More Detailed EA

☒ No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By: Matthew Poole Glasgow Unit Manager
Name Title

s/Matthew Poole\s Date: October 20, 2015
Signature